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THE OLYMPIAN RELIGION.

II.—OUTLINE OF ITS PARTICULARS.

BY THE RIGHT HONORABLE WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

I HAVE already referred in the two previous articles to the sources and authorship of the Olympian religion. In this and the succeeding article I shall examine its particulars, with only one preliminary observation. For the present purpose it should be viewed apart from the forms which it had assumed in the historic period, and from the religion of the Italian peninsula.

What, we have to ask, was the substance of this Olympian religion? what was its pervading character? and what were its leading and governing details? It seems, at first sight, as if it could be principally described by negatives. For example: in the Achaian army before Troy, and in the Greek peninsula at the period of the "Troica," we have no sign of the great institution of Priesthood. Nor did priests, in the historic period, ever become a real power in Greek society, although the office continued to be one of dignity. Again: as there was no priestly order, so there were no sacred Books. If we consider how in the two great divisions of Latin Christendom, respectively, the priesthood and the Bible supply the most powerful of all living forms, we shall be able to see how much this double negation means. There was not, indeed, any collective organization; or any provision for unity; or any moral code; or any standing office of instruction for those who professed the religion, either in their youth or in mature age. There were sacrifices, greater and smaller, which were offered originally by the king, or in private by the head of the house. These we may consider, on one side, as a kind of bribe to the gods; but, on the other hand, and for the better minds, they had in them an element of reverence and piety. There were prayers, limited indeed and jejune as compared with the prayers of the gospel, but yet, in Homer's time, of frequent practice, and of some dis-

ciplinary and educative power. Certain points of natural morality were very strongly recognized by men: the care of the supreme god* for the suppliant and the supplicant, which thus far made weakness a sacred thing; the tenderness and regard† which every man had for his wife; the strong and even fastidious sense of personal decency; the stringent law of incest and an utter estrangement from all offences contrary to nature.

In truth, and without exaggeration, the extreme forms of sin, some of them still rampant even in Christian countries, may be said to have been unknown among the Achaian Greeks, as they are represented in the Homeric Poems. All these points, here summarily stated, deserve a careful examination. There were also the sacredness of the oath, the inviolability of marriage, the respect paid to age; which were, each in its degree, props to religion. But over and above all these, it is plain, when we contemplate the Achaian mind and life, that religion was, at the Homeric period, a present, familiar, and active idea in the common life of the common man. It came spontaneously to the front in every serious occasion of existence. The religious man was also the man socially and morally good. Humanity, in its youth, had not licensed the odious art of setting up abstract opinions, or professions of belief, as substitutes for right conduct, or apologies for its absence. The idea of a divine power, whether conceived in the singular or the plural, and although subsisting in a most imperfect shape, was, I think, nearer to the still childlike mind of the Achaian Greek than it is under the rule of a far purer creed, when life has become so much more complex and artificial. Of course I make an exception of those who have made the things unseen a matter of serious personal concern for themselves, to live and to die by. The Olympian scheme may have become for the Romans, in the main, an instrument of civil government; for the average educated Greek of the classical period little better than a shadow; but there still lingered something of an archaic sincerity about the Homeric system. As a religion it was indeed weak, narrow, and inadequate; from some points of view even dangerous because seductive; yet, after all, it was a religion.

In two important points the religion was particularly weak. One of these was its relation to a future life. The delineation of the Under-world in the "Odyssey," though it rises high at times in

* *Il.*, XIII., 624; *XXI.*, 75. *Od.*, IX., 270; *XVI.*, 422. † *Il.*, IX., 341.

poetical excellence, and abounds in characteristic touches, appears to be based entirely upon foreign, and perhaps principally Egyptian, traditions, which it enfeebles in their most essential points. It is gloomy and dreary, hopeless and helpless; but it does not present to us any picture of actual retribution except in the cases of two persons, Tantalos and Sisuphos, of foreign extraction and probably foreign birth.* Tituos and Orion are also here, but neither of them is to be considered as akin to the Achaïans. Minos † administers justice among the dead (*themist-euei*) apparently as a judge would in a human community. Heracles appears in sorry plight, but it is his Shade only, and he himself is among the Immortals. Upon the whole, there is not given, for the Achaïans, any connection between general conduct and future happiness or misery; and when Menelaos ‡ receives the promise of a state of bliss, it is not for his virtues, which seem to have been great, but because he is the husband of Helen, and the son-in-law of Zeus.

This doctrine of a future life, feeble in Homer, and without effective sanction, becomes wholly ineffective in historic Greece. But there is one marked exception supplied by the Poet in the case of what may be termed political perjury. For here the Powers that ruled below are invited to inflict the vengeance; and on this occasion only are Nature-powers invoked by the Achaïans, because their general residence, according to the poet, is in the Under-world. Tartaros itself appears to have been a place for the punishment of gods guilty of rebellion, in conjunction with whom it is particularly named. But although in the case of political perjury the tie between the two worlds is recognized, § the Poet does not anywhere venture upon applying the doctrine by specifying any person as having suffered, or as being about to suffer, the punishment.

Upon the whole, in respect to the doctrine of a future life, the Olympian system takes its place far beneath older religions, especially those exhibited in the Zendavesta and the Egyptian monuments. It can hardly be affirmed, as respects the second point I have to name, that the comparison with Asia, even including the Hebrews, or with Egypt, is similarly disadvantageous to Achaïan religion. It is the profoundly important point of sexual morality. In the "Iliad" monogamy is geographically separated from polygamy by the Hellespont; and I

* Od., XI., 582-600. † Od., XI., 563. ‡ Od., IV., 563-569. § Il., III., 278; XIX., 259.

suppose it is to be assumed that under this head a monogamous people probably stood higher, in conception and in practice, than one which had polygamy practically exhibited before its eyes as a recognized institution. It is, however, obvious that among the Achaian Greeks there was no fixed restraint upon licentiousness of the ordinary kind, unless it were within the bond of marriage. The concubines of many chieftains before Troy are named in the "Iliad"; and when Briseis (herself a substitute for the daughter of Chrusus) is taken away from Achilles, another substitute is supplied for his bed.* But Agamemnon does not rest upon the plea of long-continued absence from home when he announces his intention to install the daughter of Chrusus as a mistress at his palace in Argos, despite the claims of Klutaimnestra.† Further, we learn that, when Eurucleia was purchased by Laertes, there was no unlawful connection between them, because, and as it seems only "because, he eschewed the resentment of his wife."‡ On the other hand, the illicit relations between a portion of the women servants in the palace of Odysseus and the Suitors are mentioned among the justifying causes for putting them all to an ignominious death.§ Speaking more generally, it cannot be doubted that the common idea of marriage in the Poems, probably in harmony with the general practice, is elevated and pure. Except where an idea of that description was prevalent, such a scene as the sixth "Iliad" gives us between Hector and Andromachè could hardly have been conceived; and much less could the wonderful history and character of Penelopè.

It may, however, be said that, viewing the licentiousness of many among the divinities, we can give no credit to the religion for any actual or relative chastity found among the Achaians. Undoubtedly the moral law had less application, under the Olympian system, to those divinities than to men. But we must always bear in mind not only that there were models of strict purity among them, but that we must distinguish between the mythological incidents of the scheme and a true religious heart, quite out of keeping with those incidents, which had not yet ceased to beat within it. It may still remain a question whether the superiority over the Trojans in regard to sexual license, which is traceable

* Il., IX., 663-665. † Il., I., 29-31; 109-115. ‡ Od., I., 430-433. § Od., XXII., 440-445; 462-644.

in the Poems, may have been largely due to that principle of self-command, or *sophrosunè*, which was so deeply imbedded in the Grecian character.

There are, in effect, three characteristics to which I attach especial weight as proving of themselves that the Olympian scheme of Homer exhibits a real and practical, though an imperfect, and not only an imperfect, but at certain points a contaminated, religion.

Firstly, it embodies the doctrine of Providence, or an actual divine government in human affairs ; not only as worked by the gods, but also as recognized by and familiar to the minds of men.

Secondly, it exhibits a constant resort to prayer in present emergencies. This practice does not extend to a concern with remote events ; and the prayer is in most cases limited to the needs or aims of the person who offers it. If it be a public prayer, then, of course, it embraces collectively the case of all those whom the person offering it may represent.

Beyond this, it seems clear that there was an act of worship not only in the sacrificial feasts, but at every meal or entertainment, at the least where animal food was used.*

Thirdly, it appears that worship and moral conduct were regarded as having some real connection one with the other. The virtue specially religious was the care of the suppliant and the stranger ; but the *theoudès*, the devout or pious man, is never a man of wicked life, and the case of Hector may be taken as one which exhibits liberality to the gods in sacrifice as suitably associated with affectionate, upright, and warmly patriotic character.

If we look beneath the surface, the affairs of this world are, in truth, governed, according to the poems, by the interplay of three agencies. These are : (a) the gods ; (b) destiny ; (c) human will. And the acts of men and events of life are the resultant, to use the phrase of mechanics, from these competing forces, each of which is real, and acts upon, and is limited by, the others.

The limit on the power of gods is exhibited by Telemachos, when Nestor has suggested that, with Athenè's aid, he might be able to give the Suitors something else to think about than wedding or wooing Penelopè. "Ah, no," replies † the rather feeble-minded youth, "that is indeed a great affair, and not within the compass of my hope ; no, not though the gods should will it."

* Il., IX., 206-221, and Od., XIV., 435. † Od., III., 225-228.

Here he manifestly is not thinking of any obstacle which destiny might offer, but of the strength of the Suitors, which gods could not overcome, or else of the lack of strength in himself, which they could not sufficiently supply. For this Athenè (as Mentor) rebukes him, and holds that the thing can be done; but immediately proceeds to bring into view that other limitation: "impartial, all-sweeping death cannot be warded away by gods, even from their favorites, when the hour has sounded for the destiny of natural dissolution to take effect." * Again, Telemachos replies: "Think not of saving Odysseus; already the Immortals have designed death and dark fate for him." † Here we have the three powers shown in separate action, and finally one of them overcome by the action of the other two.

Destiny may overcome man; or, again, man may overcome destiny. ‡ Destiny may be too strong § even for god and man united. Again, gods or a god may overcome man; but nowhere do we find that man overcomes a recognized Achaian god. Especially the combination of god and destiny, the *moira theou*, can bring about the strangest falls, such as that of Queen Klutaimnestra, who was good before she yielded to the great temptation, enhanced, probably, by her resentment. ||

Again, the very highest divine power, represented in Zeus, may set destiny aside and overrule it; ¶ but it is an extreme exercise of prerogative, and will not be approved by the Court of the Olympian heaven.

Great advantage has been obtained, in the study of prehistoric religions, from tracing the roots of the names given to the several divinities. While the Homeric poems offer remarkable facilities for establishing the connection of religion with ethnography, it must be admitted that, with regard to the significations of names, they furnish us with little assistance by well-established conclusions as regards the principal or properly-Olympian deities, if we except the single case of Zeus, on account of his affinity with Dyæus. According to the accounts given by Herodotos, most of the names were derived from Egypt; the remainder from the Pelasgians, excepting that of Poseidon, which he conceives to be Libyan. ** He perhaps had in view the names of Phta for Hephaistos, and that of Neith for Athenè, which seem, how-

* Od., 230-238. † Ibid., 240-242. ‡ Il., XVI., 730. § Od., III., 227-228. || 'd., III., 265, 266. ¶ Il., XVI., 441. ** Herod., II., 50.

ever, to be disputed. What others he meant to indicate it is hard to say. Among the names he excepts is that of Themis. But Themis appears to have been Themsi, the Egyptian goddess of justice.* He seems to be right in saying that some of those names were derived from the Pelasgians, whom we may presume to be largely represented by the Albanians of the present day; † a race never Hellenized like their congeners farther south in the peninsula. Hahn, in his "*Albanesische Studien*," traces etymologically to the primitive tongue of the country the names of Zeus, Demeter, Okeanos, Thetis, Helios, Rhea, Kronos. Not one of these, except the first, belongs to the grand living and working thearchy of Homer. Hahn also gives a root for Themis, ‡ which means saying or speaking, but this is far less probable than Wilkinson's suggestion drawn from an Egyptian source.§

If we find a root for Zeus both in Indian and in Albanian speech, this, as far as it goes, tends to show that the deity was worshipped over wide spaces, and among nations which had long lost all connection one with another; and even suggests, that his name may have been the representation of a deity single and supreme.

We have seen that Hahn gives the names of six other deities mentioned in Homer. || It is remarkable that here he confirms the evidence of the Poems, for every one of them appears there in connection, not with the Olympian system, but with the dynasties of what Mr. Grote has called the foretime.

Who, then, were the individual deities, that inhabited the palaces constructed for them by the skill of Hephaistos within the folds of Olympos? ¶

We must discard, in answering this question, all regard to the number twelve, which, if warranted by Latin traditions, has no place in the scheme of Homer. The only numerical indication he has given us is that Thetis, on her visit to Hephaistos, finds that deity engaged in constructing twenty automatic chairs or

* Wilkinson, in Rawlinson's "*Herodotos*," II., 92.

† Hahn, p. 234.

‡ Rawlinson's "*Ancient Religions*," p. 98. Max Müller's "*Science of Religion*," Lecture III., pp. 171, seqq.

§ Rawlinson, pp. 136, 137. Also Max Müller.

|| Hahn deals with other names which do not appear in Homer, and refers to Athenè, but without any clear sign that the name is of Pelasgian derivation. Hahn, *Alb. Stud. Heft. I., Abschn. IV.*, p. 253.

¶ II., I., 607.

stools for use by the gods in the Olympian court. But this limit, although one of number, does not admit of a clear and determinate verification. Towards making out a list, however, I offer the following observations :

1. The five really great gods, with whom there is no other that can compare in ruling powers, are Zeus, Heré, Poseidon, Apollo, and Athenè.

2. Next come the deities whom the Poet himself represents to us as usually present in Olympus among the assembled Immortals. These are Hephaistos,* Arès,† Hermes,‡ Iris,§ Leto,|| Artemis,¶ Themis,** Aphroditè,†† Dionè,‡‡ Paieon,§§ Hebé.|||| Thus far we have sixteen occupants for the twenty seats.

Helios also is introduced (Od., XII., 376) as addressing Zeus and the body of the Immortals ; but this is in the outer Zone of the "Odyssey," and even the name of Olympus is carefully avoided in the passage.

We have thus far the number of sixteen. There are others with claims more or less obscured : Demeter, Persephonè, Dionusos, and Thetis, who is of low rank, but is a most important personage in the "Iliad." Aidoneus, on account of his rank in the Triad, can hardly be excluded, though he has not the active ruling powers of Persephonè. And Heracles is said (Od., XI., 503) to join in the banquets of the gods, and to be mated with Hebé, an undoubted Olympian. Histiè might also be named, but her personality is faint : she is only mentioned, I think, four times, and always, as Ouranosis, by way of attestation.¶¶ On the whole, the number of the Homeric Olympians seems to oscillate from a little below to a little above the number twenty. And twenty was a small number, compared with the crowds of those who ruled in the various orders of the Assyrian and Egyptian systems, of either of which it is very possible that Homer may have had some inkling. But it is probable that he was not unwilling to be in this matter somewhat indeterminate. Accommodation was of the essence of his method, and accommodation involved much compromise. He was content to use his deities as the purpose of his poems required, and he did not need to be prepared with an

* Il., I., 571. † V., 368, 369 ; XIII., 523. ‡ Il., XXIV., 334; Od., V., 3. 28.
§ Il., XXIV., 77, 144. || Il., V., 447. ¶ Ibid. ** Il., XV., 93. †† Il., V., 421,
427. ‡‡ Il., V., 370. §§ Ibid., 899. ||| Il., IV., 2; V., 905. ¶¶ Od., XIV., 159,
et alibi.

aye or no upon the exact rank of each in a system compounded of the materials supplied to his hand by heterogeneous nationalities.

So much for the Olympian gods, properly to be so called. Partly in the background, partly in the lower levels of the scheme, partly upon the wings of purely poetic figure, the following preternatural entities fill up the scheme of Homer :

1. The Nature-powers, who, on great occasions are (except Okeanos) summoned to the great chapter, or general assembly, of the upper world.

2. Foreign deities wholly unassimilated, such as Kirkè, Calupso, Proteus, Amphitritè, the Seirenes, Ino Leucotheè, a damsel deified for Amphitritè's domain ; Atlas, Eidotheè.*

3. Ministers of justice or of doom : Erinues, Kères, Harpuiai.

4. Powers directive of human fortunes : Moira, Moros,† Aisa, Kèr (the singular being most commonly used in this connection), Kataclothes.

5. Purely figurative and poetical conceptions : Dream (Oneiros), Sleep (Hupnos), Death (Thanatos), Terror (Phobos), Panic (Deimos), Strife (Eris), Rumor (Ossa), and the like.

Some of these shadowy personages come nearer than others to full impersonation. Eris, for example, is the mistress and the sister of Arès (Il., IV., 440) ; and she is also despatched by Zeus (Il., XI., 2-12) to stir the army to battle by her shouting. And Hupnos (Sleep) not only joins with his brother Thanatos (Death) in transporting the dead Sarpedon to his home, but is bribed, by the promise of a wife from Herè, to undertake his hazardous operation upon Zeus (Il., XIV., 267, seqq., and XVI., 682). On the more gracious side of these subjects, we have the slightly-drawn figures of the Charites, and of the Muses, who bear the high title of daughters of Zeus (Il., II., 491) and officiate at Olympian banquets (Il., I., 604), but who perhaps derive their chief importance from the invocations of the poets.

6. Finally, we have, in dark shadow, the presentation of the rebel powers in the supernatural world. These are the Titans, who dwell in Tartaros, or under it, with Kronos for their companion and their chief (Il., XIV., 203, 274; XV., 225). And with them come the Giants ; about whom we only know that they were plunged into ruin, and that they were of the kindred of Poseidon

* Od., V., 335.

† Moros may perhaps be defined as Moira, less the element of personality.

(*Od.*, VII., 59, 60; X., 205, 206). Most of these figures are faintly sketched upon a remote background, and it is hard to say whether we are to take them as persons or not.

Important distinctions of quality and prerogative are to be observed even among the Olympian divinities most properly so called. One chief line of cleavage is between the five great deities and the rest of the band. The preëminence of these five cannot be too carefully borne in mind.

1. They are (with differences among themselves) differently related to the conditions of time and space.

2. They are never subjected, in the Poems, to palpable defeat or disparagement.

3. They take part providentially, rather than corporally, in the direction of human affairs. But this rule has exceptions; such, for example, as the action of Poseidon in the fourteenth and fifteenth books of the "*Iliad*."

4. They do not enter visibly into battles of men (*Il.*, XIV., 386).

5. In the Theomachy, they have no conflict among themselves.

6. Their power is not absolutely limited to a particular function or department.

7. No one of them has individually any concern with food or drink, except as to their satisfaction in the reek of sacrifice. Consider, on the other hand, the case of Sleep in *Il.*, XIV., 241, and more conspicuously that of Hermes, who enjoys, after his long flight, ambrosia and nectar in the grotto of Calupso. (See *Od.*, III., 92-96.)

8. The deities below the line are not, as a rule, made the objects of special prayer from mortals. The case of Artemis, in *Od.*, XX., 61, will require a separate discussion.

9. Among the common distinctions of the five, however, we cannot include a higher moral standard as belonging to the class.

But all the Olympian deities, above as well as below the line, are subject to the general conditions of theanthropism. Corporally they alike bear the human form. (See, for example, *Il.*, II., 476-479, where this is given to Zeus, Arès, and Poseidon.) Mentally, they have a like equipment of human faculties and propensities, on a scale generally enlarged.

There are also distinctions of power, and otherwise, even among these five greater gods. In sheer power Zeus is manifestly superior

to any other deity singly (Il., VIII., 208-211 ; XV., 136); while, as between him and the aggregate, or a powerful combination, the question may be said to rest in doubt. Upon the whole, however, the five are linked together by power more than any other single attribute. They differ very much both in moral and in intellectual characteristics. They differ also in point of ethnographical relations. Athenè and Apollo may be said, in many important respects, to form a class apart.

The assembling of the gods constitutes a marked feature in the Homeric system.

The forms of this assembling were various. In a certain sense, they were perpetually in company one of another, by virtue of their habitual residence on Olympus. As, for example, the colloquy of Zeus and Thetis is followed by his going to his own palace (Il., I., 533); but all the gods rise up to receive him on his arrival, which implies that they were in some sense assembled. Then follows a spirited conversation, with a full-formed entertainment for its sequel. Again, in the seventh book, when the Achæians proceed to raise a bulwark for the ships, the proceeding is observed from Olympus and a conversation of gods takes place (VII., 443-464).*

Neither of these meetings was an *agorè* properly so called. But in Il., IV., 1, the gods appear as sitting in *agorè* (*ἡγορόωντο*), and in Il., VIII., 2, Zeus constituted or appointed an *agorè* (*ἀγορὴν πενήδατο*). This *agorè* of the gods is like the *boulè* or council among men. The numbers gathered are small, and under ordinary circumstances there is no formal summoning. But, on the great occasion preceding the Theomachy, a general assembly of Immortals of all classes is held, and the Nature-powers appear, down to the humblest. Okeanos alone receives no summons, and it seems that respect for his seniority, and a reverence due to him as the source of the whole divine order, saved him from being called to a meeting where there was no place vacant for his influence. Themis† is the agent employed by Zeus to call the deities together.

There is room for criticism on the mode in which this incident has been presented. The great Assembly, thus formally called together, when it is gathered does not deliberate, but fights. Further, its members do not all fight, but only a few.‡ Next,

* See also Il., VIII., 36; XIV., 224; XV., 84. † Il., XX., 4. ‡ Il., XX., 31-40.

of those who are in the fight, one, namely Aphroditè, never makes an appearance in the embattled rank, but only leads the defeated Arès off the field.* Again, this Assembly has no influence whatever on the issue of the war; for that issue had been determined and decreed long before. And, lastly, of the five divinities combatant on the Trojan side, there are two, Apollo and Leto, whom the poet never subjects to any disparagement: consequently, in these cases, pleas have to be found by which a contest is avoided. There remain three deities to be disposed of; two of the partisans of Troy, namely, Arès, the opponent of Athenè in the war, and Artemis (who in Troas seems clearly to be the Earth-goddess afterwards worshipped at Ephesus), are ignominiously defeated. The River-god Xanthos is also worsted, but with more honor. In the Poems generally, Homer has represented only Olympian debates and differences. But here he seems to deal with the cults of the two countries as they are exhibited in the human sphere, and we see the earthy religion of Troas smitten to the ground before the more refined and intellectual scheme which the Poet has elaborated for his nation.

But this is an exceptional case. The regular *agorai* come to practical conclusions, though the concurrence of the Court is usually conveyed only by a tacit assent.

In the third Book of the "Iliad,"† Athenè carries from the divine Assembly the commission under which she suggests to Pandaros that he should break the solemn pact of the two nations. This proceeding no doubt ministers to the accomplishment of the grand plot such as it has been arranged with Thetis, but it is the only suggestion of an immoral act which ever grows out of the meeting of an Olympian council. In the eighth Book, the injunction of non-interference by Zeus is received with general acquiescence, only Athenè murmuring, and obtaining from him something which approaches to a mitigating clause.‡ In the first "Odyssey" the whole plan for the relief and return of Odysseus is stated and adopted; Poseidon, who is the only god otherwise minded, absenting himself.§

From the simple fact that there were assemblies of the gods, it appears that they constituted a polity of some kind.

A monarchy, strictly so called, can hardly be regarded as a polity, so far as regards the relation between the monarch and the

other members of the community; although the monarch may establish a real polity as among those members themselves, and as between the classes which they may compose. But the Olympian scheme was no pure monarchy in the sense I have described.

We may test the position of Zeus principally in two ways. First, by the amount of his ultimate coercive power in relation to the other divinities. Secondly, by finding an answer to the question whether the plots of the two great Poems were accomplished conformably to his mind and will.

Both require examination in detail. As to the first, we have seen that no single deity could compete with him. He had actually inflicted corporal punishment upon Herè (Il., XV., 18-25); and Poseidon had to give way to his threat (*ibid.*, 205-211). But it remains doubtful whether, after the Olympian scheme was established, a powerful combination of deities could have dethroned him as it did before that great consummation (Il., I., 397-406). As to the second question, it may be truly said that the reëstablishment of Odysseus in his family and on his throne was agreeable to justice, of which he was all along the champion; and also that the fall of Troy was due to the perpetration of an atrocious outrage and the obstinate refusal of redress (Il., VII., 357-364). Yet, in the "Odyssey," Zeus has to tolerate the cruel persecution of Odysseus by Poseidon, with which he could have had no sympathy; and in the "Iliad" he consents to the overthrow of Troy against his inclination (*ἐκὼν ἀέκοντί γε θυμῷ*, Il., IV., 43), and on the principle of give and take as announced by Herè, "We will cede to one another, I to you and you to me" (Il., IV., 62, 63); this, too, although Ilios was to Zeus the dearest of all cities on the habitable earth (*ibid.*, 44-49).

So that Zeus, at any rate, did not carry to a corporal issue the question of his power to overrule the rest of the deities collectively, and found it either necessary or prudent to allow in given cases a given scope to their adverse wills, as the condition on which his general supremacy in the affairs of men could be maintained.

Again, as to the form in which the Olympian government was carried on, it was what we may term constitutional. Affairs were largely discussed in council, and the will of Zeus is never set against the aggregate will of the rest. It is true that the plot of the "Iliad," considered as the *μῆνις*, or Wrath, and also its consequences, are determined by him at the suit of Thetis, and ratified by

the nod (Il., I., 528), without other sanction or intervention. To this determination applies the declaration of Il., I., 5, that the design of Zeus was duly fulfilled. In lesser cases he allowed the self-assertion of others ; and this is the grand exhibition of his own. It is based on retribution for a gross and singularly ungrateful outrage.

In its idea and its practice the Olympian religion is a polytheism, but one reduced to order and method. It is kept within these lines mainly by the political influence of a presiding mind, although the resort to the strong hand is frequently brought into view ; and in both respects the Poet maintains a substantial analogy to the course of human affairs ; the main distinction, perhaps, being that Zeus has not, while Agamemnon has, his superior among his own powerful vassals. Self-will, and even caprice, are traceable in the special action of the deities singly ; but the collective government of the gods works for good.

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[TO BE CONTINUED.]